

From J.H. Dulles	June 28, 1927
To The Rev. Clarence D. Macartney	July 18, 1927
From Clarence XXX E. Macartney	July 22, 1927
" Walter I. Clarke	July 25, 1927
To Walter I. Clarke	July 28, 1927
From Walter I. Clarke	July 28, 1927
To Walter I. Clarke	July 29, 1927
From M.A. Matthews	Aug. 9, 1927
To Rev. Mark A. Matthews	Sep. 13, 1927
" The Rev. Clarence E. Macartney	Oct. 31, 1927
" Dr. William O. Thompson	Nov. 11, 1927
From J.H. Dulles	July 26, 1927
" Henry Barraclough	July 28, 1927
" M.A. Matthew	Nov. 8, 1927
" Simeon K. Elliott	Nov. 23, 1927
To Prof. A.W. Robertson	Dec. 7, 1927
From Prof. A.T. Tobertson	Dec. 12, 1927
To Prof. Charles R. Erdman	Feb. 16, 1928
" Clarence E. Macartney	Feb. 27, 1928
From Clarence E. Macartney	Feb. 29, 1928
" Lewis S. Mudge	May 10, 1928
To Lewis S. Mudge	April 26, 1928
" Lewis S. Mudge	May 11, 1928
From James H. Snowden	June 11, 1925
To Clarence E. Macartney	June 15, 1928
" Prof. J.G. Machen	June 22, 1928
From Prof. J.G. Machen	June 29, 1928
To Prof. J.Gresham Machen	July 18, 1928
From J. Gresham Machen	July 23, 1928
To Editor Christian Endeavor World	July 20, 1928
" Prof. J. Gresham Machen	July 26, 1928
From H.H. Fletcher	Aug. 1, 1928

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J. H. Dulles

PRINCETON, N. J., June 28, 1927

My dear Dr. Speer:-

I subjoin a list of books on Marriage and Divorce,
which I think would be helpful for your purpose.

Sincerely yours,

J. H. Dulles

- Wilkins, H. J.- History of Divorce and Re-marriage for English Churchmen.
London. 1919
- Watkins, O. D.- Holy Matrimony. A Treatise on the Divine Laws of Marriage.
London. 1895
- Franklin, B.- Marriage and Divorce. N.Y. 1889
- Box, G. H. & Gore, C.- Divorce in the New Testament. London. 1921
- Chase, F. H.- What did Christ teach about Divorce. London. 1921
- Ernst, W.- Treatise on Marriage and Divorce. London. 1880
- Charles, R. H.- The Teaching of the New Testament on Divorce. London. 1921
- Richard, A. P.- Marriage and Divorce. London. 1888
- Gigot, F. E.- Christ's Teaching concerning Divorce. N.Y. 1912. (Rom. Cath.)
- Watkins, O.- Holy Matrimony: a Treatise on the Divine Laws of Marriage.
N.Y. 1895
- Woolsey, T. D.- Divorce and Divorce Legislation. 3rd ed. N.Y. 1885
- Evans, H. D.- Treatise on the Christian Doctrine of Marriage. N.Y. 1879
- Hovey, A.- Scriptural Law of Divorce. Phila. 1866
- Petrovits, J. J. C.- New Church Law on Matrimony. Phila. 1921. (Rom. Cath.)
- Bishop, J. P.- Commentaries on Marriage, Divorce and Separation. Chic. 1891

Dr. Macartney, p/2

7/18/27

a memorial to Dr. Gillespie? Dr. Kerr wants me to be present for that and if the evening would suit you I would try to arrange it and let you know whether it would be practicable as soon as I hear from you.

Very cordially yours,

REK:C.

C. E. Macartney

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

MODERATOR
ROBERT E. SPEER, D.D.
NEW YORK, N. Y.

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SAN ANSELMO, CAL.

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July 22, 1927

Dr. Robert E. Speer,
156 Fifth Avenue,
New York, N.Y.

Dear Dr. Speer:

Thank you for your letter about the revision of the Judicial Procedure and about the Committee on Divorce. I have consulted some of the books mentioned in your list. The one by "Charles" I reviewed at length in the Princeton Theological Review. There is a very valuable pamphlet in the collection of the Historical Society here in the Witherspoon Building, entitled "What are the Grounds for Divorce as Revealed in the Holy Scriptures," by Rev. J. W. McIlvain, D.D., LL. D., also a larger pamphlet entitled "The New Testament Law on Divorce" by Dr. William E. Boggs. These are the best things I have read on the subject and deal definitely with the proposal made many years ago to revise the Confession of Faith and delete the passage on desertion as a ground for divorce. Except for the expense it would be a good thing to have ~~that~~ these pamphlets copied and sent to our ministers. They would pay much more attention to such pamphlets than to a collection of reference books.

I am delighted that there is a prospect of your being at the First Church on the evening of November 20th, and I shall put you down for that date. If there is any change in your itinerary you can let me know.

I have been requested by the Editor of the Forum to write a paper on the New Testament teaching on Divorce. As this will, of necessity, cover much of the ground traversed in the paper read to the Committee on Divorce and which I was directed to prepare for publication in the Church, I am taking the liberty of withholding this paper until the article on the same subject has appeared in the Forum. I hope this will meet with your approval. The paper might then go out as a reprint, together with the statistical paper prepared by Dr. Covert.

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-2-

I expect to sail to-morrow on the Veendan for
Plymouth.

With best wishes, I am

Faithfully yours,



Walter I. Clarke.

FILING DEPT.

AUG 5 1927

SECRETARIES

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America

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PENNA.

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JUL 27 1927

Mr. Speer

July 25, 1927.

Dr. Robert E. Speer,
Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions,
156 Fifth Avenue,
New York, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Moderator:

I have just received a letter from Dr. Macartney on the eve of his departure for Europe of which I enclose *no encl.* a copy.

In connection with Dr. Macartney's letter I wish to explain that Dr. Mudge commissioned me to circulate to the church at large the report of Dr. Macartney's Sub-Committee on Marriage and Divorce and also the paper prepared by Dr. Covert on the same subject in conformity with the action taken by the General Assembly at San Francisco as follows:

Committee on Marriage and Divorce

The Committee on Marriage and Divorce presented its report through its Secretary, the Rev. Lewis S. Mudge, D.D., LL.D., and its recommendations were adopted as follows:

1. That the Committee report progress, and ask for continuance to give opportunity for further study.
2. That the Committee be authorized to distribute throughout the Church a document to be made up of a report by the Rev. Clarence E. Macartney, D.D., to the Committee, and a paper of a statistical character prepared by the Rev. William Chalmers Covert, D.D.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America

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2- Dr. Robert E. Speer

Dr. Covert has turned over to me his portion of this material and it is in type awaiting copy from Dr. Macartney. Dr. Macartney's letter is in response to my repeated requests for his material.

It was Dr. Mudge's wish to save expense by transmitting both the report concerning Marriage and Divorce and the final report of the Special Commission of 1925 at the same time. In view of the fact that Dr. Macartney's report has not been given to us we are holding up the Marriage and Divorce matter and are sending out the report of the Special Commission.

I personally question the propriety of using a reprint of a magazine article, from The Forum or any other periodical, as an official report of a Sub-Committee of the General Council. I can see that it would be perfectly proper to make a magazine article from an official report but I do not think we ought to print the matter the other way around.

Since Dr. Macartney has sailed for Europe I do not see that we can do anything in this matter but await his return. I am, however, writing thus frankly to you because of Dr. Macartney's reference to you in his letter to me. You of course know that Dr. Mudge is in Europe and will be ^{away} until about the middle of October.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America

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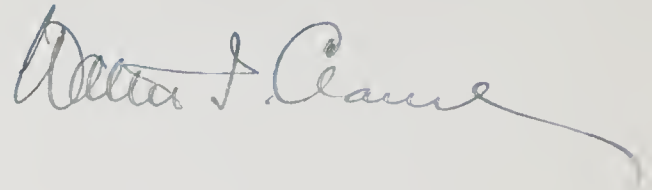
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PENNA.

3- Dr. Robert E. Speer

With kind regards

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Walter I. Clarke". The signature is written in dark ink and extends to the right with a long, sweeping tail.

WIC W

Enclosure

Com on Marriage + Divorce

FILING DEPT.

AUG 5 1927

SECRETARIES

July 28, 1927

Mr. Walter I. Clarke,
518 Witherspoon Bldg.,
Philadelphia, Penna.

Dear Mr. Clarke:

I was away yesterday and only received this morning your letter of July 25. I had already heard from Dr. Macartney that he was using his paper for an article in The Forum and desired this Forum article to be circulated in place of his previous paper with Dr. Covert's document. I did not receive Dr. Macartney's letter in time for any communication with him before he sailed. Would it not be well for you to find out from The Forum how soon the article would be out and then could it not be used without stating that it was a reprint but simply as being the document which Dr. Macartney had supplied in accordance with the action of the Committee on Marriage and Divorce? If there were any difficulty on the part of The Forum we could make it quite clear to them, as you point out, that it is they who are using our material rather than we who are using theirs.

With kind regards,

Very cordially yours,

REG/V

J. H. Dulles

LIBRARY OF
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

REV. J. H. DULLES, LIBRARIAN

PRINCETON, N. J., July 26, 1927

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Ms. 27.102
My dear Dr. Speer:-

In reply to yours of the 22d I would say that I think that Charles's Teaching of the New Testament on Divorce is the best of the volumes I mentioned. He concludes that divorce of one cause is allowed and remarriage for the innocent party, and that the teaching of Paul "probably" allows both.

The small work of Box and Gore is a reply to this and concedes no divorce and no remarriage.

Bishop Chase's small book is also a reply to Charles. These three are well worth reading for an understanding of the New Testament teaching.

For the history of the matter Wilkins's History of Divorce is perhaps the best and is brief.

I know no good book that treats of the ~~of the~~ sociological phase of the matter, as it affects the home and society in general.

Sincerely yours,

J. H. Dulles

Henry Barraclough

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America

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July 28, 1927

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JUL 29 1927

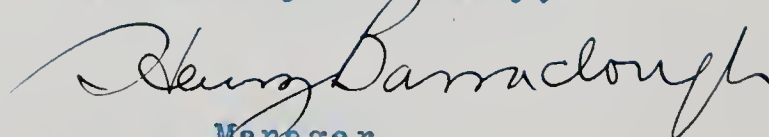
Mr. Speer
Dr. Robert E. Speer,
156 Fifth Avenue,
New York, N.Y.

Dear Dr. Speer:

In reply to your letter of yesterday, it is very evident in the office here that Dr. Macartney had November 20th in mind. He asked to see a calendar to look up the third Sunday in November and also inquired as to whether this would be a convenient time for you because of the General Council meeting the following week in Chicago. Perhaps his office will be able to straighten out the matter with you, but the above is the extent of our information here.

With reference to the two pamphlets- the one by Rev. J. W. McIlvain, D.D., entitled "What are the Grounds for Divorce as Revealed in the Holy Scriptures" is 8 pages of printing. The one by Dr. William E. Boggs entitled "The New Testament Law on Divorce" is 58 pages. The Historical Department state that these are extremely rare and it is unlikely that other copies will be available anywhere. It is not known whether any copyrights exist on these two pamphlets for they are both undated as to publication.

Yours very sincerely,



Manager
Administration Dept.

Ackd/ 8/15/27

M. A. Matthews

Mr. Speer

First Presbyterian Church
Seattle, Washington

M

RECEIVED
AUG 15 1927
Mr. Speer

August 9, 1927

Dr. Robert E. Speer,
156 Fifth Avenue,
New York City.

My dear Brother:

The list of books you sent is a very good list. But how old are you? The following books named by you cannot be located:

- HOLY MATRIMONY. A treatist on the Divine Laws of Marriage. London 1895
- MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE, Franklin N.Y. 1889
- TREATISE ON MARRIAGE AND DIMORCE, Ernst. London 1880
- MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE, Richard, London 1888
- HOLY MATRIMONY: A Treatise on the Divine Laws of Marriage, N.Y. 1895
- DIVORCE AND DIVORCE LEGISLATION, 3rd. ed. N.Y. 1885, by Woolsey
- Treatise on the Christian Doctrine of Marriage, N.Y. 1870
Evans

The following named book is out of print:

HISTORY OF DIVORCE AND RE-MARRIAGE FOR ENGLISH CHURCHMEN, Wilkins. London, 1910.

Perhaps you got that list out of your grandfather's diary.

With kind personal regards, I am

Your true friend,

M. A. Matthews

September 13th, 1927

Rev. M. A. Matthews, D.D.
Seattle, Washington

My dear Mark:

It was a pleasure to get your notes of July 25th and August 9th, but I am dreadfully sorry to see this modernistic spirit which is creeping over you so that you speak disrespectfully of my grandfather's diary, and of books on marriage and divorce that are more than twenty-two years old. Dr. Macartney is going back in his bibliography even further than I did. Before he went to Europe this summer he wrote me of two books he had found in the Historical Society in Philadelphia which seemed to him two of the best treatments of the subject that he had found. These were the following:

"What Are the Grounds for Divorce as Revealed in the Holy Scriptures," by Rev. J. W. McIlvain, D.D., LL.D.

"The New Testament Law on Divorce," by William E. Boggs.

I have been trying ever since to get copies of these but have found that they are out of print and cannot be obtained, and the Historical Society naturally will not sell its copies.

Perhaps we have enough books left, however, that are available to give us all the help that we need in understanding what the real teaching of the New Testament is. It remains to be determined of course whether that teaching was intended only for that time or is equally valid for us today. Perhaps there will be some of us who will think that there is no such question as this; but ^{that} whatever the New Testament lays down, the rule for Christians is the binding rule still. If we any of us take this position we must take it unflinchingly and for the whole of the New Testament.

I spent last Sunday with Rev. W. Courtland Robinson, D.D., speaking in his church in Delhi. Judge Bruce is a neighbor of his who came in for dinner Saturday evening, and we had a long talk over the question of our judicial procedure. Dr. Robinson holds strongly the view that we should make of the permanent judicial commission a supreme court with final authority. Judge Bruce was at first disposed to oppose this view, holding that in our democratic system General Assembly ought to retain this power; but as the argument went on I rather gathered that he inclined more and more to Dr. Robinson's position. Judge Bruce agrees with Dr. Macartney's suggestion that the term of service for members of the commission should be at least five years, and he and Dr. Robinson, I gathered, thought they should be eligible to reelection, at least for one additional term, as in the case of the General Council.

If the judgments of the judicial commission are not to be final, then certainly consideration should be given to various questions:

1. Should it be required that at least one third of the commission should dissent if a minority opinion is to be presented?

2. If a minority opinion is to be presented ought it not to be provided that those who present it should be allowed to make a statement in its defence, and that then a statement should be made by the majority, and that then, without further debate, the question should be put?

3. If the Assembly declines to accept the majority preliminary judgment, ^{and} then votes to review, how is the debate to be limited. If the commission is required to present a statement giving the finding of the facts, and this alone is to be allowed, how can the Moderator enforce the limitation in a debate, and what is he to do if the minority of the commission presents a dissenting finding of facts?

Will you be able to get to Chicago and get the Committee together early enough for a full consideration before the meeting of the Council on November 30th? The Committee of Marriage and Divorce meets, as you know, at 10 o'clock on the morning of November 29th.

I trust that you have had a good summer and are in better health. I often think of you and I hope that God may give you grace and wisdom and strength for all your work.

Very faithfully yours,

RES-ZMR

Mr. Speer

October 31, 1927
Dictated 28th.

The Rev. Clarence W. Macartney, D.D.,
First Presbyterian Church,
Pittsburgh, Pa.

My dear Dr. Macartney,

Just for the sake of clarifying my own mind I have set down the enclosed very tentative statement on the subject of the teaching of the New Testament with regard to marriage and divorce. Will you read it over and criticise it in any way, or tell me if in any particular you think the provisional views set forth in this statement are unsound? I judge that I have only embodied your own much more mature and better informed judgment.

It is very good of you to take the trouble to come to the meetings which Dr. Daubenspeck has planned for Monday afternoon. It was laying altogether too much on you, and I have begged Dr. Daubenspeck not to make too much of the occasion. Looking forward with pleasure to seeing you then, and with kind regards, I am,

Very sincerely yours,

RES:C.

M. A. Matthew

First Presbyterian Church
Seattle, Washington

NOV 12 1927

November 8, 1927

Dr. Robert E. Speer,
Moderator of General Assembly,
156 Fifth Avenue,
New York City.

My dear Brother:

I have received your memorandum concerning our divorce question. I am studying it very closely and I am more convinced than ever that we should not touch the question unless we are prepared to open up the whole subject from every angle, which no church seems to be willing to do.

As I said to you at the last meeting, there are no grounds for divorce stated in Scriptures. The exception mentioned does not justify us in claiming that ground for divorce. Then, the whole question revolves around, what is a marriage? I doubt seriously whether we are prepared to go into it from that standpoint. I hope to present some of these things to you at the meeting.

With best regards, I am

Your true friend,

M. A. Matthew

Mr. Speer

November 11, 1927

Dr. William O. Thompson,
Columbus, Ohio.

My dear Dr. Thompson,

I enclose herewith a memorandum on the subject of marriage and divorce which I wrote out on the train a few days ago just for the sake of trying to clarify my own mind. I think this statements leaves a number of questions open for discussion, but the more points we can clear up the easier it will be for us to identify and deal with the issues that remain. While you were away I got a list of books on marriage and divorce from Dr. Dulles, the Librarian of Princeton Theological Seminary which I had copied and sent to a number of members of our Committee. Some of these books are out of print, but some are still available, I think, namely, Fox and Gore - "Divorce in the New Testament", Chase - "What Did Christ Teach about Divorce," - Charles - "The Teaching of the New Testament on Divorce."

Dr. Macartney wrote me that he had found two little books in the Presbyterian Historical Society in the Witherspoon Building in Philadelphia which were among the best things he had seen. No copies of these are available however and one would have to consult them in the rooms of the Historical Society. One is McIlvain's "What are the Grounds for Divorce as Revealed in the Holy Scriptures", and the other is Boggs' "The New Testament Law on Divorce."

I trust that you had a good summer abroad, and I hope now that the spirit of wisdom and love will lead forward to some solution of the Princeton problem.

Very cordially yours,

RES:C.

Simon K. Elliott

NOV 25

My dear Mr. Speer:

With great pleasure
I learn from the daily papers
that Clarence Mac Cartney is
not considering getting a divorce.

For this noble attitude
he should have the thanks of the
next Assembly.

Yours Truly,

Simon K. Elliott.

Philadelphia, Nov. 25—

Mr. Speer

December 7th, 1927

Professor A. W. Robertson,
Louisville, Ky.

re. marriage & divorce

My dear Professor Robertson,

Our General Assembly has a committee at work on the subject of marriage and divorce. In every such discussion I presume the two questions that arise are- first, what is the teaching of the New Testament with regard to divorce and remarriage, and, second - Is this teaching permanently authoritative or does it represent a local and temporary adjustment as in the case of the apparent acquiescence of the New Testament of slavery and war.

With what study I have been able to give to the matter, it has seemed to me that either the teaching of the New Testament forbids divorce altogether or else it allows it only in the case of adultery, and that either re-marriage after divorce is forbidden altogether or else allowed only in the case of the innocent party, where the divorce has been allowed because of adultery. As to the teaching of St. Paul, it has seemed to me that it perhaps went beyond this in allowing certain forms of separation, but that these did not amount to divorce and did not permit re-marriage. Are these interpretations correct in your judgment or have you reached different conclusions?

Also, will you tell me whether you think anything is to be made of the different words that are used for "Divorce" and "putting away", "re-marriage" and "take another", and between the Greek words for adultery and fornication?

At present our Church law allows divorce both for adultery and for irremediable desertion. This latter clause, of course, is very loosely construed, so that many interpret it as sanctioning divorce for a number of causes. There are many among us who think that divorce should be limited to one cause and re-marriage allowed only in the case of the innocent party.

There remains the other question as to whether the New Testament teaching on these subjects was meant to set up social legislation or to establish permanent principles? We know how chary our Lord was of any legislation whatever. Does not that make all the more significant His very explicit utterances regarding divorce and his view of marriage as having been intended by God from the beginning to be an organic and indissoluble relationship?

I do not want to impose on you by asking any extended statement. Perhaps you have already put your views on these subjects in writing, or could tell me very briefly what the conclusions are to which your study of the New Testament, so far more complete than mine, has brought you.

With kind regard,

RES:C.

Very cordially yours

A. T. Robertson

Mr. Speer

u. marriage & Divorce

SOUTHERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

NEW TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION

A. T. ROBERTSON

5

NORTON HALL, ROOM 22

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LOUISVILLE, KY.

DEC 14 1927

Dec. 12, 1927.

Mr. Speer

My dear Dr. Speer: I have been away a week at Lancaster, Penn., with the St. Paul's Reformed Church and at Alliance, O., with the Mount Union College.

In regard to your letter of Dec. 7 I find myself wholly in agreement with your view that the New Testament allows divorce only for adultery and remarriage only for the innocent party. Broader in his Commentary on Matthew presents this view fully and clearly. Paul, as you say, allows separation, but not divorce, on other grounds.

I do not think that Jesus
laid down laws so much as stated
principles, but such a Christian
will want to follow the teaching
of Jesus rather than a state
law. I agree with you also that
Jesus intended his view of marriage
and divorce to be fundamental
if I can be of any service
to you about this matter or anything
else, do not hesitate to call
upon me.

I find that I shall be in
the east again next summer
(Ocean Grove, etc.) so that I
shall be open to summer
supply again.

Blessings on your manifold
work and life.

Cordially yours,
A. T. Robinson.

Mr. Speer

February 16, 1928

Professor Charles R. Erdman, D.D.,
Princeton, N.J.

My dear Charlie,

I trust you received the telegram which I sent you from Mudge and myself on Monday asking whether it would be possible for you to have prepared a brief which would summarize the opinions of the commentators on the New Testament passages with regard to marriage and divorce. I am afraid that the members of our special committee have not been working on the subject very much and many of them perhaps would not have access to the commentaries as you have. I think if you could prepare such a brief and have Lew Mudge make copies of it for the use of the Committee next week it would be a great help. I feel this all the more strongly in view of Dr. Matthew's statement which Lew Mudge has just sent us. The more I think about the matter and study the New Testament carefully, the clearer it seems to me that it is unmistakable teaching is- (1) That there can be no divorce except for adultery. (2) That where one of the parties is an unbeliever there may be separation but without divorce or re-marriage of either party.

Any teaching beyond this seems to me has to be imported into the New Testament or has to be supported on other grounds than the New Testament.

If this is the case there remains only the question as to whether the teaching of the New Testament in this matter is binding upon us or not. If it is, then our law needs to be changed. If it is not, then the question arises as to how we may know what New Testament teachings are binding upon us and what are not?

I do not find any warrant in the New Testament for some of the confused-pressed by Dr. Matthews. And I cannot for the life of me see why it follows that because marriage is dissolved by death, therefore, it may be dissolved before death. There are many relationships and engagements and contracts which death inevitably dissolves, but which during life must be absolutely fulfilled.

I have been interested in travelling around the Church this year to find that most of those with whom I have talked have taken the lax view as we would regard it and think that we will not be able to get the Church to adopt what seems to us to be the Scriptural view. But I do not see how the authority of the New Testament can be asserted as absolute in doctrine, as it certainly is, and as only relative in the matter of fundamental moral issues.

Ever affectionately yours,

RES:C.

February 27, 1928
Dictated 24th.

The Rev. Clarence W. Macartney, D.D.,
Sixth Avenue,
Pittsburgh, Pa.

My dear Dr. Macartney,

We missed you very much at the meeting of the Committee on Marriage and Divorce. After a long discussion the proposal of your sub-committee was defeated, only Dr. Taylor, Dr. Erdman and myself voting for it, and the motion made by Dr. Matthews was carried, recommending that we ask the Assembly to send down to the Presbyteries an overture cutting out from the last section of the present chapter on Marriage and Divorce the clause with regard to such wilful desertion, etc. This would have the effect of limiting divorce to the one cause of adultery and re-marriage to the innocent party and would say nothing whatever with regard to separation. Perhaps this is best. At any rate it will bring the issue before the presbyteries, and it will force the Church to restudy the teaching of the New Testament.

I trust that you are planning to be at the General Assembly. The recommendation of the Committee will need to be presented as clearly and forcefully as possible and Dr. Thompson as chairman may want the help of some of the members of the Committee in case the report needs defense before the Assembly.

Very cordially yours,

RK:C.

C. E. Macartney
First Presbyterian Church

Sixth Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Feb. 29, 1928.

Mr. Speer
S

RECEIVED

MAR 2 - 1928

Dr. Robert E. Speer,
Board of Foreign Missions,
156 Fifth Ave.,
New York.

Dear Dr. Speer;

Thank you for your letter of February 27th. As I understand the action, the main thing for which we were contending will be secured. I confess I do not see just how Dr. Matthews, in view of the paper he sent out, could sponsor such a commendation. Unless there is likely to be a strong opposition to the proposed measure, I do not think that I shall go to the Assembly.

With best wishes, I am

Faithfully yours,

C. E. Macartney

CEM/RRH

Lewis S. Mudge

Divorce Mr. Speer

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

MODERATOR
ROBERT E. SPEER, D.D.
NEW YORK, N. Y.

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PHILADELPHIA, PA.

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May 10, 1928.

Dr. Robert E. Speer,
156 Fifth Ave.,
New York City.

Dear Bobby:

It was a joy to see you again yesterday and it was indeed hard for me to cut our interview short for there were many things on my mind and heart. However, I realize how many matters of pressing importance you must find before you and what I have in mind can, of course, wait.

I find upon my desk this morning your letter of April 26th, to which you made reference yesterday. This is the letter in which you suggest an additional paragraph in connection with the report of the Special Committee on Marriage and Divorce. In accordance with your wishes I am having your letter copied and sent to Drs. Taylor, Erdman and Macartney and also to Dr. Thompson. I enclose herewith a copy for your files.

Ever affectionately yours,

Lewis S. Mudge
Lewis S. Mudge
Stated Clerk

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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(COPY)

P & O. B. CO.
D. S. MANTUA

April 26, 1928

My dear Lew:

I am on my way home now from Jerusalem and until I came on board this boat at Port Said four days ago I had had no opportunity to read the minutes of the meeting of the Committee on Divorce held in Philadelphia on Feb. 21. I am writing now at the first opportunity with regard to the paragraph on the second page beginning "In presenting this report".

This paragraph seems to do justice to the position of those members of our Committee who believe that it is unwise to take any action in amending our Confessional statement on divorce. But it does not recognize or do justice to the position of others on the Committee who believe that something more should be done than the proposed overture involves. Would it not be wise to add, therefore, some such statement as the following.:

"There are other members of the Committee also who believe that the teaching of the New Testament and especially what they conceive to be the instruction of our our Savior calls for further revision of our Confession than is proposed in the suggested overture."

No doubt Dr. Taylor or Dr. Erdman or Dr. Macartney will have already brought this to your attention. Will you be good enough to send a copy of this letter to each of them and also to Dr. Thompson, and will you kindly send a copy to my office for me.

The meeting in Jerusalem was much better and greater than my expectation. I hope that much good will come from it and the opportunity to see Palestine was worth waiting sixty years for. I had also a most satisfactory visit with our Syria Mission. Now under blue skies and over blue seas I am nearing Marseilles having left Mrs. Speer and our daughter in Syria. I expect to reach New York on the "Majestic" on May 6th. It will be good to see you again.

Ever affectionately,

Robert E. Speer (signed)

Mr. Speer

May 11, 1928.

C O P Y

Dr. Lewis S. Mudge, ✓
Witherspoon Bldg.,
Philadelphia, Pa.

Dear Dr. Mudge;

Thank you for your letter with the enclosure from Dr. Speer. It struck me, too, that the addendum put in the Committee's report to the General Assembly, greatly weakens it, and is, indeed, an absurdity. The members of the Committee who dissented from the action ought to have expressed their convictions in the minority report. Is the Committee to meet again before the Assembly? After some uncertainty, I have decided to go to Tulsa. Do I understand that a room is reserved for me as a member of this special Committee?

Faithfully yours,

GEM/RRH

James H. Snowden

Mr. Speer

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Published
Every Thursday

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A Religious Journal of Today

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Business Manager

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Editor

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Advertising Manager

RECEIVED

S

JUN 11 1928

Mr. Speer

June 11, 1928.

Dear Robert:

I suppose you have received the papers which were sent. I thank you for your suggestion about articles on divorce and may follow it out. I see the Methodists went on record for "divorce on the ground of adultery or its moral equivalent." I rather lean towards this or something like it, but it opens a wide door. I doubt if your overture goes through. It is always both a pleasure and a means of grace to me to meet you.

Very truly yours,

James H. Snowden

Mr. Spear

June 15, 1928

The Rev. Clarence E. McCartney, D.D.,
First Presbyterian Church,
Pittsburgh, Pa.

My dear Dr. McCartney,

In looking over the Presbyterian's account of the General Assembly I see that the very thing has happened which we feared, and that the proposed divorce overture is set forth with the concluding paragraph in the Blue Book but without the qualifying statement which Dr. Thompson made verbally, stating that just as there were those on our Committee who would be stopped short at the proposed overture as the Blue Book indicates, there were other of us as the Blue Book does not indicate, who would like to go further.

Would this not give you a good occasion, without criticizing at all the report in the Blue Book or raising any issue between us and the members of the Committee who were not prepared to go as far as we in what we believe to be the acceptance of the full teaching of the New Testament, to write an article to the "Presbyterian" setting forth the whole issue involved in the Overture, and the grounds for our belief that our Constitution should be amended in the way proposed, in order to bring it into accord with what as we believe is the unmistakable teaching of Our Lord and of St. Paul.

Very cordially yours,

RES:C.

Postscript. You will be entertained by the enclosed review of one of your books which I clipped from some Bible Institute magazine.

RES.

Mr. Speer

SECRETARIES

June 22, 1928

Professor J. G. Machen,
Princeton, N.J.

Dear Professor Machen,

Two years ago the General Assembly appointed a Committee to which was referred an overture which had come to the Assembly from one of the presbyteries with regard to the question of marriage and divorce. This Committee brought to the last General Assembly a report recommending that the following overture be sent down to the presbyteries:

"Shall the Confession of Faith, Chapter XXIV, Section VI., be amended so as to strike out the words, 'or such willful desertion as can no way be remedied by the Church or civil magistrate,' so that the Confession of Faith, Chapter XXIV, Section VI, will read as follows:

'VI. Although the corruption of man be such as is apt to study arguments, unduly to put asunder those whom God hath joined together in marriage; yet nothing but adultery is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage: wherein a public and orderly course of proceeding is to be observed; and the persons concerned in it not left to their own wills and discretion in their own case.'"

The General Assembly voted to send this overture to the Presbyteries. Dr. Macartney and I were in a minority which felt strongly that we should have gone further, in accordance with what we believe to be the teaching of the New Testament. We both prepared briefs on the subject for submission to the Committee. Dr. Macartney's statement was published some time ago, and I think he plans to publish something further in the hope that it may be of influence with the presbyteries, in persuading them to go at least as far as the overture proposes.

I am taking the liberty of enclosing herewith copy of the statement which I prepared. Would it be asking too much of you to request you to read it and tell me whether you believe this to be a correct interpretation of the teaching of the New Testament? I should be very much obliged if you would be willing to do this.

Very faithfully yours,

RWS:C.

J. Gresham Machen
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

J. GRESHAM MACHEN

POST OFFICE ADDRESS
BOX 4, PRINCETON, N. J.

Summer Address:
Seaside Inn,
Seal Harbor,
Maine

June 29, 1928

RECEIVED
JUL 2 - 1928
Mr. Speer
Dr. Robert E. Speer,
The Board of Foreign Missions of the
Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.,
156 Fifth Avenue,
New York, N.Y.

My dear Dr. Speer:

Your letter of June 22nd, enclosing a copy of your statement entitled "A Brief and Provisional Study of the New Testament Teaching on Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage", has been forwarded to me from Princeton. In replying, I am somewhat hampered by my remoteness from theological libraries - particularly because I have not with me a copy of the Constitution of our Church and so am not quite clear, for example, where the paragraph quoted at the end of your Statement is to appear. I have, however, examined the Statement with care, and will endeavor to comment upon it to the best of my ability, as you request. It is certainly an important and able document, worthy of the most careful attention of the Church.

Unfortunately, I do not feel able to come to any definite decision as to the main point. I have never been able to decide whether 1 Cor.vii.14-16 does or does not represent desertion as being such an annulment of marriage as to make remarriage permissible. Much is to be said for the former view, which is at the basis of the present law of the Church, but on the other hand I am impressed with certain of the arguments on the other side. All that I can do now is to comment upon certain details in your Statement which seem to me to involve questionable interpretations of the language of the New Testament. It is possible that if the considerations that I shall adduce with regard to these details seem to you to be at all cogent, you may regard them as having some bearing upon the main question.

In the first place, then, I do not think that the textual questions at Matt.xix.9 have any appreciable bearing upon the point under discussion. The only critical apparatus that I have with me here is the summary apparatus of Souter, so that I have not been able to make any full study of the textual phenomena; but all the variants do seem to contain the mention of "fornication", so that, especially when Matt.v.32 is taken into account, there can hardly be reasonable doubt but that the Gospel according to Matthew does represent our Lord as making that exception to his prohibition of divorce.

In the second place, therefore, I do not think that I could say, as you do on p.2 (compare p.4), that the teaching of Luke xvi.18 and Mark x.2-12 "forbids divorce, without any exception whatever". It is true that the exception is not mentioned there; but those passages should be interpreted in the light of Matt.v.32; xix.9. Our Lord forbids such putting away of a wife as was in

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the mind of His hearers and as was permitted under the old dispensation; but the passages in Matthew show that He was not referring to such destruction of the marriage relationship as is caused by adultery. I quite agree, however, with what seems to be your view on p.5 that "fornication" refers to unfaithfulness after marriage, not to sins committed before marriage.

In the third place, I do not think that the wording of the sentence near the bottom of p.9: "He [our Lord] recognizes that there were two social ideals in the matter, the Jewish law of marriage and divorce and His conception", takes quite clear enough account of the dispensational character of Jesus' teaching and that of the whole New Testament. Jesus certainly believed that the Mosaic law, including the law about divorce, was the law of God, as He believed that the Old Testament was the Word of God and was true. That such was His belief is generally recognized by modern scholars even by those whose own view of the Old Testament is very low. But He believed that the Mosaic law, at least in important aspects, though given by God and authoritative, was given by God and authoritative for the old dispensation which was now terminated by the momentous event of His coming. Without that dispensational orientation in our reading of Jesus' words, we are prey to a host of errors as to His view regarding the authority of Scripture and the like. I am a little afraid that the sentence to which I have referred, particularly the phrase "the Jewish law of marriage", might conceivably - though no doubt from your own point of view incorrectly - be interpreted to refer to the continued existence, during the same period of time, of two "social ideals". In reality, Jesus is setting the old dispensation over against the new.

In the fourth place, I do not think that the words of the Sermon on the Mount are applicable both to believers and to unbelievers in the sense which you might possibly be held by some readers to favor in section c on p.6. It is true that the "multitudes" are apparently represented as being present when the discourse was spoken, and in Matt.vii.29 Jesus is said to have been teaching them. But that latter reference may be of a general character, and in Matt.v.1,2 it is distinctly said that His disciples came unto Him and that He taught them. Throughout the discourse, the disciples whom Jesus is addressing are sharply distinguished from the great outside world. To take the Sermon on the Mount just as teaching a universal fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man on the basis of what may be called "natural religion", and as setting forth a type of life which can be lived independently of that momentous change of status which takes place, under the new dispensation, when a man becomes a "disciple" of Jesus or (as was even then implicit in discipleship) a believer in Him, is, I think, to fall into serious error. It is indeed important that the multitudes as well as Jesus' disciples were present during this discourse of our Lord or at least were the recipients of similar teaching from Him. No doubt the discourse was profoundly relevant at every point to their situation; for they were invited

at every moment to become disciples

Just allowed!
But dis'pensed.
2 Paul
G. H. v. 11. 30

But am?
st ant. h
G. H. v. 11. 30
Ch. 4

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

J. GRESHAM MACHEN

POST OFFICE ADDRESS
BOX 4, PRINCETON, N. J.

at every moment to become "disciples" if they were not disciples already, and the warnings of the Sermon to those who would not heed the invitation may have, or at least should have, touched their hearts. But it would be a great mistake to think of our Lord as acquiescing - if we may use that word - in the continued remoteness of those who remained outside the company of His disciples, and as giving directions to them as to mere members of the great outside world. Such a view obscures the stupendous character of the decision before which men are placed by the Sermon on the Mount and by the whole New Testament. I do not mean at all that you share this view, but I am merely afraid lest your language in this section might be held by some readers to involve it.

Finally, the parenthesis at the top of p.6, where you say that Paul is "speaking, as he says, for himself and not for the Lord", might be held to involve the view that in the seventh chapter of I Corinthians Paul is distinguishing things that he says on the basis of his own opinion from things that he says by authority of Christ. That view, I am convinced, is incorrect. What Paul really does is to distinguish cases where he can quote a word of "the Lord" spoken during Jesus' earthly ministry, from cases where he can quote no such word but gives directions on the basis of his apostolic authority. Even the latter directions are written by authority of Christ, but the readers cannot in the case of them be referred to words which Jesus had uttered on earth and which would have to be recognized as authoritative even, for example, by opponents of Paul's apostolic authority. For this interpretation of "the Lord" in I Cor. vii. 10, 12, 25, I think I could venture to claim the support of the overwhelming weight of modern exegetical opinion, though, as I have said, I am here remote from libraries and so cannot verify such claim.

The opposing view, that Paul is distinguishing his own opinions from what had been given him by the Holy Spirit, has been encouraged by what is certainly a mistranslation in the Authorized Version in I Cor. vii. 40. The words at the end of that verse clearly do not mean: "I think that in addition to giving what I have just said as my own opinion I can also claim in support of it the authority of the Spirit of God." What they do mean is: "I think that I also (as well as teachers among you or elsewhere in the Church who boast of their possession of the Spirit) have the Spirit of God." It is even a question whether the word $\delta\omicron\kappa\alpha\iota$ should be translated "think", rather than "am convinced" or the like; but if it is to be translated "think", it is clearly used in a semi-ironical way: "I make bold to say that I, as well as they, have the Spirit of God." There cannot be the slightest doubt of the reference of the word "also" to the pronoun "I". Indeed in the Greek it actually forms one word, $\kappa\alpha\iota\epsilon\gamma\omega$, with that pronoun, and even if it were written separately the meaning would be the same.

We ought to guard ourselves carefully, I think, against the interpretation of I Cor. vii which would make Paul distinguish degrees of authoritativeness for what he writes. That does not mean

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J. GRESHAM MACHEN

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that the authority with which he wrote led him always to issue positive commands. Sometimes it led him to issue permissions, or to indicate merely that one course of action is apt to be happier than another. There are many cases where the Word of God leaves decision to the individual man, on the basis of the great general lines of conduct set forth in the Word, and as a man may be led by the Holy Spirit enabling him to use aright the considerations that the situation presents. But what I do mean is that Paul in the Epistles is speaking everywhere in the plenitude of apostolic authority.

Here again I do not mean at all to say that you share the view that I reject, but only that the words of your Statement might possibly be held by some readers to involve it. The question of marriage and divorce should be settled on the basis of Scripture, not by isolating the words spoken by Jesus while He was on earth as being alone authoritative. I am glad to recall a passage somewhere in one of your recent books in which, in a somewhat different connection, you explicitly reject this latter procedure.

In conclusion, let me say what an honor I hold it to be to be consulted by you with regard to this important matter. I am the more sorry not to be able to express a definite opinion on the main question. Mine is no doubt an unsatisfactory state of mind to be in with regard to a matter of such moment, and I am certainly open to conviction.

May I call your attention to a clerical error on p.4 of your Statement (ninth line from bottom). "Matt.5:32 should be read instead of "6:32".

Very sincerely yours,

J. Gresham Machen

Quoniam in hoc. hoc dicitur pro non dicitur
Benedictus. Benedictus
Hoc quo dicitur
VII. 24-26 dicitur dicitur & dicitur

v. 29. Hoc = multum

VII. 13. Hoc quo dicitur. Hoc quo dicitur in

Hoc quo dicitur dicitur, hoc quo dicitur in hoc dicitur pro hoc dicitur

Hoc quo dicitur dicitur - hoc dicitur dicitur dicitur pro hoc dicitur. Hoc quo dicitur
in hoc dicitur. Hoc quo dicitur. Hoc quo dicitur. Hoc quo dicitur -

Hoc quo dicitur dicitur. Hoc quo dicitur dicitur - hoc quo dicitur pro hoc dicitur dicitur

in hoc dicitur

in hoc dicitur dicitur pro hoc dicitur

in hoc dicitur dicitur pro hoc dicitur

Mr. Speer

FILING DEPT.

JUL 20 1928

SECRETARIES

July 18, 1928

Professor J. Gresham Machen,
Sea Side Inn,
Seal Harbor, Maine.

My dear Professor Machen,

I am very much obliged for your kind letter of June 29th with its friendly and helpful comment on the statement which I sent you. I shall be very glad to modify the statement at the points you indicate to avoid any risk of misunderstanding.

Ever since I studied the Epistles to the Galatians under Dr. Cooper Hodge I have interpreted the word Sokew as you suggest in your letter. We use the word "seem" in English in the two senses- first, of a thing's seeming to be what it is not and, second, of a thing's seeming to be what it actually is, and I have construed the word in its latter meaning always in Galatians II., 6, 9, as Dr. Hodge taught us to do, and would suppose that it should be similarly construed in I. Corinthians VIII; 40.

With reference to the Sermon on the Mount I must confess that I have always found it not, as so many people allege, the simplest and easiest part of the gospels but one of the most difficult. Is your view that it was addressed only to disciples, and that its words are applicable only to believers, absolutely clear and sure? It is true, as you point out, that it begins with the statement that His disciples came unto Him and that He taught them, but it ends with the statement that "the people were astonished with His doctrine for He taught them as one having authority." And are not the closing words of the Sermon on the Mount clearly addressed to others as well as to disciples?

As you say, however, these are secondary questions; the main issue is as to whether the New Testament anywhere sanctions divorce for other causes than adultery? Clearly the gospels do not recognize any other cause. The only question, accordingly, is as to whether St. Paul does so? If he did, would it not be a contradiction to the teaching of our Lord in the Gospels? It seems to me that those who allege that St. Paul allows divorce on other grounds are faced with this difficulty, which to our view is an impossibility. Does not St. Paul clearly teach in Romans VII; 2, 3, that marriage can be dissolved only by death, and that dissolution on any other ground and re-marriage constitutes adultery? And does not His teaching in I. Corinthians VII. specifically indicate: First, that if believing husbands and wives separate their separation is not divorce, that they are to remain unmarried or to be reconciled. Then, he proceeds to speak of the case of a believer married to an unbeliever, where also apparently he recognizes separation. He says nothing about re-marriage or reconciliation here. Perhaps, accordingly, this might be held to justify divorce on other grounds than adultery but, if so, it would appear to apply only to the case where a believer is married to an unbeliever and even here it would be at variance, in my view, with the teaching of our Lord.

But this would be a rather strange position, would it not, namely, that there is one moral law binding on husband and wife, both of whom are believers, and a different moral law binding when only one is a believer? Our Christian contention has always been, has it not, that the foundation of moral principle is not in human circumstances but in the character of God? If a certain course of action is morally wrong for believers is it not morally wrong also for unbelievers and vice versa?

And on this particular matter of divorce is it not true that if the Sermon on the Mount is our Lord's teaching for believers, then certainly for believers, who are the only people, presumably, for whom our Church law is intended, divorce save for adultery is forbidden? But, as a matter of fact, our Lord's teaching on the subject in which He forbids divorce except for adultery was directly addressed in Mark X. not to believers but to the Pharisees. The same is true of His teaching in Luke XVI. Clearly in both these passages our Lord is speaking to the Pharisees and in both of them he tells the Pharisees explicitly that whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another commiteth adultery.

Is any other view of the marriage relationship except this high and indissoluble view both of our Lord and St. Paul in keeping with the Fifth chapter of Ephesians, and its conception of Christ's marriage relationship to the Church.

Referring again to your suggestion that the Sermon on the Mount was addressed to believers and its moral ideals intended for them, could it not be observed in addition to what I have said, first, that elsewhere in the Gospels, and especially in the Gospel of John, teaching deeper and stronger, if such might be, is clearly addressed to others than believers and, second, that, whatever the Old Testament law may have been, Christ is clearly displacing it with a higher law which He declares was the original purpose of God, that Moses' law was simply an adaptation to their hardness of hearts, as Paul also speaks in Acts XVII; 30, "the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now He commandeth".

The fundamental question is, is it not, as to what God's law for Christian believers as set forth in the New Testament is, and whether our present Church law which is the law for Christian believers in our Church, does or does not conform to the New Testament teaching?

Won't you please criticize freely whatever I have said here, and show me if anything that I have said is in error?

You spoke of not having a copy of the Constitution of the Church with you. The section which is under consideration is Chapter Four of the Confession of Faith, the entire chapter is as follows:

"I. MARRIAGE is to be between one man and one woman: neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband at the same time.

II. Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife; for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue, and of the Church with an holy seed; and for preventing of uncleanness.

III. It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry who are able with judgment to give their consent; yet it is the duty of Christians to marry only in the Lord.

7/18/28

And, therefore, such as profess the true reformed religion should not marry with infidels, Papists, or other idolaters; neither should such as are godly be unequally yoked, by marrying with such as are notoriously wicked in their life or maintain damnable heresies.

IV. Marriage ought not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity forbidden in the Word; nor can such incestuous marriages ever be made lawful by any law of man, or consent of parties, so as those persons may live together as man and wife.

V. Adultery or fornication, committed after a contract, being before marriage, giveth just occasion to the innocent party to dissolve that contract. In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce, and after the divorce to marry another, as if the offending party were dead.

VI. Although the corruption of man be such as is apt to study arguments, unduly to put asunder those whom God hath joined together in marriage; yet nothing but adultery, or such willful desertion as can no way be remedied by the Church or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage: wherein a public and orderly course of proceeding is to be observed; and the persons concerned in it not left to their own wills and discretion in their own case."

The amendment which is proposed, and which some members of the Committee object to and some others, like Dr. Erdman, Dr. Macartney and myself think does not go far enough, is simply to omit from Section VI. the words "Or such willful desertion as can in no way be remedied by the Church or civil magistrate."

I trust that you are having a pleasant and restful summer at Seal Harbor.

Very sincerely yours,

W.G.C.

P.S. Since writing this letter I have been amazed to receive copy of the "Christian World" for June 28th, containing the paper on divorce which I sent you. I cannot imagine how the "Christian Endeavor" got this paper. It had no authority whatever to print it.

P.P.S.

Mr. Speer

FILING DEPT.

JUL 23 1928

SECRETARIES

July 20, 1928

Editor Christian Endeavor World,
Tremont Temple,
Boston.

Dear Sir,

I have just received a copy of the Christian Endeavor World for June 28, 1928, containing the paper which I wrote on the subject of Divorce and Remarriage for a Committee of our General Assembly. Would you mind telling me how you got this paper, and who sent it to the Christian Endeavor World for publication. The paper was distinctly marked "A Brief, Provisional Study" and was to be thoroughly revised before publication. I am sorry to have the paper published in the incomplete and unrevised form which was sent you.

Very truly yours,

RES:C.

J. Gresham Machen

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

Summer Address:
Seaside Inn,
Seal Harbor,
Maine

J. GRESHAM MACHEN

POST OFFICE ADDRESS
BOX 4, PRINCETON, N. J.

July 23, 1928

Dr. Robert E. Speer,
The Board of Foreign Missions
Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.,
156 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y.

My dear Dr. Speer:

I am greatly interested in your letter of July 18th, and appreciate the weight of the considerations which it adduces. At the same time I am still not able to overcome the indecision in which I stand with regard to the question of desertion as a ground for divorce.

Your central argument, as I understand it, is simply that our Lord clearly forbids divorce except on the ground of adultery, so that if Paul permits it on the ground of desertion he is in direct contradiction with our Lord's teaching, and since it should not be supposed that this is the case, we must interpret Paul's words in I Cor. vii. 15 in some other way, and thus must hold that he too as well as Jesus regarded adultery as the only legitimate ground of divorce.

Against this argument, the objection may perhaps be raised that it proves too much. In Mk. x. 11, 12 divorce is forbidden without mention of any exception whatever. Yet in Mt. v. 31; xix. 9 adultery is clearly recognized as a ground of divorce. If therefore Mk. x. 11, 12 be pressed, there is a contradiction between that passage and the passages in Matthew. In this case there is no possibility of relief by any other interpretation of those latter passages; for they are perfectly plain. If, therefore, we are to avoid the conclusion either that Jesus contradicted Himself or that Scripture has contradicted itself in its report of His words, we must abandon our pressing of Mk. x. 11, 12, and must simply say that in that passage the case where one party to a marriage has in fact destroyed the marriage relationship by adultery is not at all in view. And indeed there is no real difficulty about such a solution. It is often very dangerous to take an utterance spoken in one connection and apply it in all other connections. So Mk. x. 11, 12 denies the right of divorce in the sense in which the Pharisees meant it in their question in verse 4; and the connection in Lk. xvi, though not so plain, may be regarded as similar: but these passages do not at all deal with the destruction of the marriage tie by adultery which is mentioned in Mt. v. 31; xix. 9.

Applying a similar principle of interpretation to the comparison of all the passages in the Gospels on the one hand with I Cor. vii. 10, 11 on the other, one may conceivably hold that the Gospel pas-

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sages simply do not take account of the case that is dealt with in I Corinthians. The Gospel passages forbid a man to "put away" his wife except for fornication. But have they anything to say about the case where the wife has already gone away of her own accord and has thus herself broken the marriage tie? It is, indeed, true that the word translated "put away" (*ἀπολίσσω*) does not necessarily denote the forcible putting away of one who desires to remain; it might also be used of the dismissal of one who desires to depart. But still the case that does seem to be in view in the Gospel passages is that in which the wife is still living with her husband. I am not quite sure, therefore, that these passages deal with the case where the wife has of her own accord definitely and finally departed and has thus on her part brought about a destruction of the marriage relationship. At any rate it is here that the crucial question is to be found: Do the Gospel passages contemplate the case where one party to the marriage has deserted the other; and if not, does such desertion constitute such a destruction of the marriage relationship as that, as in the case of adultery, the remarriage of the innocent party is permitted?

The question is not settled with perfect clearness, it seems to me, in I Cor. vii. 10, 11. A wife is there certainly forbidden to leave her husband; and if she has already left her husband she is told either to remain unmarried or to return to her husband. But no command is directly addressed to the innocent husband. It was no doubt wrong on the part of the wife to leave him; but if she has done so, is he bound by the marriage tie, or does the principle set forth in the fifteenth verse mean that if (as is presumably the case where it is an unbeliever who departs) there is no hope of a return, the marriage tie is so destroyed by the act of desertion that the innocent party may marry again? I do not, with my present light, feel able to answer this question.

The question is also not settled, I think, by the passages in which the marriage relationship is set in comparison with the relation of Christ to the Church. For there it is the true marriage relationship that is in view - the marriage relationship that is not broken by the sin of either party. Where there is either adultery or desertion, no matter what is done in these cases by the innocent party, marriage ceases to be fitting symbol for the relationship between Christ and the Church.

By far the most serious criticism which (in response to your request) I venture to present for your consideration concerns your reference to the Old Testament law on the second page of your letter. That reference - especially the clause, "whatever the Old Testament law may have been" - might be held by some readers to mean that you are leaving open the question what view Jesus held of the Old Testament law and the Old Testament Scriptures in general. But with regard to that question I do not see how there can be any doubt whatever, if we are to regard the Bible as the very Word of God. The fundamental fact that needs to be borne in mind in dealing with the seat of authority in the Christian religion is that the doctrine

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of an authoritative Canon of Scripture was completely fixed before any New Testament book was written. Upon that doctrine our Lord indoubtedly placed the full stamp of His approval. The authority which he gave to His apostles was not to form a new Canon of Holy Scripture but to add new books to the Canon that already existed. It was impossible therefore for the new books to attain authority greater than those to which they were added.

In all the books of the New Testament, therefore, the authority of the Old Testament is recognized to the full. When the apostles went forth on their missionary labors they carried the Scriptures with them; from the beginning Christianity was a religion with an authoritative book. There was doubt, here and there, in the post-apostolic age as to the extent of the Canon of Scripture, there was doubt here and there as to just what new books were truly apostolic and were rightly to be added to the old; but the idea of the Canon stood absolutely firm. Thus the New Testament books simply shared the authority which the Old Testament books possessed, and there can be no authority of the New Testament unless there is also authority of the Old. Our Church is founded not upon the authority of the New Testament - for such separate authority never existed and never can exist - but upon the authority of the Bible, to which the apostles added new books in accordance with the commission given them by Christ.

I cannot help feeling that that fact might be obscured, at least in the minds of some readers, by the paragraph in your letter to which I have referred. And my feeling is made stronger by the last part of that paragraph, where you bring the law of Moses into connection with "the times of ignorance" which in accordance with Acts xvii.30 God overlooked. In that passage Paul is referring expressly to the idolatry of the heathen world (see the preceding verse). What affinity is there between such idolatry and the Law which God gave, with majestic manifestations of His glory, to His covenant people of old? Surely we must say that unlike idolatry the Old Testament law, though in some of its provisions temporary, was even in those provisions, while they were in force, the law of God.

With regard to the question whether the Sermon on the Mount, with certain other New Testament teaching, is addressed to believers as well as to unbelievers, I am afraid that in my previous letter I did not quite make my meaning clear. I certainly did not ~~mean~~ to say that the New Testament presents the law of God as the law of God only for believers. What I did mean is that according to the New Testament the only way in which a man can possibly keep that law is to be born again and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel in which that saving work is set forth is offered to all; in that sense all the New Testament is addressed to unbelievers as well as to Christians. But I do not think that much of the New Testament is devoted to the mere mediation of common grace to the unsaved. Common grace is not doubt important; but the New Testament is deal-

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ing with something vastly more important still. It is engaged in a presentation of the majesty of God's law (to all men (that it may still be a schoolmaster unto Christ), in offering the gospel to all, and in building up and comforting those who through the reception of the gospel have been saved.

I cannot of course attempt any grounding of what I have just been saying; to do so would be to try to write a treatise. I have only tried to indicate the points at which I feel doubtful about your presentation.

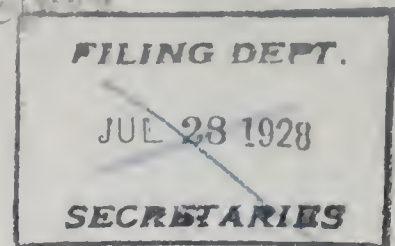
Please understand also that in what I have said about divorce, I am not expressing any final judgment or even endeavoring to present both sides of the question, but am merely endeavoring to present for your consideration certain queries that come into my mind in connection with certain portions of your argument. I am sorry not to be more helpful with regard to this important question.

I am grateful for the personal good wishes with which your letter closes. My summer is an extraordinarily busy time, because of a mass of work that I am under obligation to do, but the work is at least being done under pleasant conditions.

Very sincerely yours,

J. Gresham Machen

Mr. Spear



July 26, 1928
Dictated 23rd.

Professor J. Gresham Machen,
Sea Side Inn,
Seal Harbor, Maine.

My dear Professor Machen,

I have had time since writing you the other day to look over the article in the "Christian World" and I find that it includes only part of the paper which I had sent you, and I think does not cover the sections where you pointed out the desirability of some change in my forms of expression.

Very sincerely yours,

RES:C.

Mr. Speer

H H I Fletcher

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Boston Evening Transcript
EDITORIAL ROOMS

August 1, 1928

RECEIVED
AUG 2 1928
Mr. Speer

Dear Dr. Speer:

Replying to your favor of the 27th ult., I beg to say that the article written by you on "Divorce and Remarriage" came to me in a bundle of various matter pertaining to the Presbyterian General Assembly in Tulsa, Okla. The matter was sent to me from the Publicity Department in Philadelphia. I picked out your article and, from the way it was received, I assumed it was perfectly legitimate to publish the same. Hence, I worked it into a leading article in the Churchman Afield, a copy of which I enclose.

Very truly yours,

H. H. Fletcher

THE CHURCHMAN AFIELD

Robert E. Speer, D.D.
Board of Foreign Missions, Presbyterian Church
156 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y.